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First report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1479 (2003) of 13 May 2003, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI), for an initial period of six months, with a mandate to facilitate the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement (S/2003/99, annex I). The Council also requested me to submit a report every three months on the implementation of that resolution. The present report was prepared pursuant to that request. It provides an assessment of the security and humanitarian situation in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the steps taken by the Government of National Reconciliation towards implementing the Marcoussis Agreement. The report also describes the progress made in deploying the initial group of 26 United Nations military liaison officers to Côte d'Ivoire and the Mission's plan for the progressive deployment of the remaining 50 military liaison officers, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1479 (2003).

II. Security situation

2. The security situation in Côte d'Ivoire has continued to improve since the submission of my report of 26 March 2003 (S/2003/374 and Corr.1). In order to consolidate the ceasefire agreement of 17 October 2002, the Forces armées nationales de Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) and the Forces nouvelles, comprising the Mouvement patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI), the Mouvement populaire ivoirien du grand ouest (MPIGO) and the Mouvement pour la justice et la paix (MJP), signed a new comprehensive ceasefire agreement on 3 May. Under the terms of that agreement, the French Licorne forces and the forces of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) deployed to the western region of Côte d'Ivoire jointly with FANCI and the Forces nouvelles on 24 May, to create a weapons-free zone of confidence, extend the ceasefire line to the border between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, and disarm or expel armed Liberian elements from that area. As a result of that deployment, the security situation in the inaccessible western region of the country has significantly improved, resulting in the return of displaced villagers and the resumption of humanitarian activities.

3. Within the framework of the comprehensive ceasefire agreement, FANCI and the Forces nouvelles have established a mechanism for conducting a dialogue on

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security issues, through which they have reached agreement on specific cantonment areas for their respective troops. That dialogue and the disengagement of their forces have helped in building confidence between the two sides and in lessening tensions along the ceasefire line. The two sides, together with the Licorne and ECOWAS forces, have set up a joint operations headquarters in Bouaké and Bangolo, to facilitate coordination among the quadripartite forces.

4. Another significant development was the declaration issued on 4 July by FANCI and the Forces nouvelles formally proclaiming the end of the war in Côte d'Ivoire. Both sides pledged their loyalty to the President and undertook to resolve all future disputes through peaceful dialogue.

5. There remain, however, negative trends which threaten to reverse the important gains achieved on the security front. The initial improvement in the security situation in Abidjan, which had justified the downgrading of the security alert for the capital from phase 4 to phase 3, is now marred by the activities of armed militia groups who are opposed to the Marcoussis Agreement. In particular, the activities of the militias of the Groupement patriotique pour la paix based in the Marcory and Yopougon districts of Abidjan, and the so-called "young patriots", have created serious security and human rights challenges in the capital. The related activities of some prominent political figures, who have been calling for a campaign of civil disobedience against Cabinet Ministers affiliated with the Forces nouvelles, have also created tensions in the country.

6. Uncontrolled elements of the Forces nouvelles, who maintain checkpoints along major roads in the northern part of the country, as well as the "freelance" armed Liberian elements who still maintain a presence in the western region, constitute another major challenge to the fragile stability in the country. There are also confirmed reports about continuing rearmament by FANCI, as well as suspicions that the Forces nouvelles are rearming, which have given rise to allegations about ulterior motives. Those arms purchases undermine the confidence between the two sides and could erode the commitment of the Forces nouvelles to the disarmament of their forces.

7. The continued "partitioning" of the northern and southern parts of the country as a result of the control and administration of the northern region by the Forces nouvelles is also perpetuating a climate of uncertainty, which reinforces fears about possible renewed hostilities. Of particular concern in this regard are the measures reportedly taken by the Forces nouvelles to reorganize their forces into units corresponding to the gendarmerie, army and police forces of a State administration. The Forces nouvelles claim, however, that the restructuring was intended to ensure more effective control and facilitate payment of wages.

III. Implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement

8. The efforts of the Ivorian parties to move forward the implementation of the Marcoussis Agreement have yielded similarly mixed results. On the positive side, the Government of National Reconciliation has been installed and is now functioning under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Seydou Diarra. The Cabinet Ministers affiliated with the Forces nouvelles, who had boycotted the first three meetings of the Council of Ministers citing security concerns, eventually arrived in Abidjan to take up their posts in the new Government on 16 April. On 28 May, the

new Government presented its draft programme for the implementation of the Marcoussis Agreement, which is currently being considered by the National Assembly. The programme proposes mechanisms and ways of addressing the key issues identified in the Marcoussis Agreement, including citizenship, national identity and the status of foreign nationals; the electoral system; eligibility for election to the Presidency of the Republic; land tenure laws; the media; rights and freedoms of the individual; economic recovery and social cohesion; and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

9. The proposed programme envisages the setting up of mechanisms to work towards the development of effective proof of Ivorian nationality consistent with applicable laws. These mechanisms include a national commission on naturalization to review the existing naturalization laws, study comparable legislation on the identification process in ECOWAS countries and recommend residence permit requirements for ECOWAS nationals, as well as measures to improve the status of foreign nationals. The commission is expected to complete its work within nine months.

10. With respect to the electoral system, the Government intends to restructure the Independent Electoral Commission, introduce legislation to ensure credible voter identification, review the process of preparing the voters' register, address the question of funding for political parties, and take measures to guarantee the independence of the judiciary in adjudicating on electoral disputes. The process of reforming the electoral system is expected to be completed within a period of eight months. On the related issue of eligibility for election to the Presidency of the Republic, the Government, in keeping with the Marcoussis Agreement, would adopt measures over a period of five months to set the minimum age of candidates at 35 years and limit the tenure of office to two five-year terms. The candidates must be Ivorian citizens with either of their parents born Ivorians.

11. With respect to the rights and freedoms of the individual, the measures envisaged in the programme include the setting up of a National Human Rights Commission, and the establishment of an international commission to investigate cases of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law that have occurred since the outbreak of the conflict in September 2002. Concerning the media, the programme foresees measures that would be instituted over a period of some 30 months, beyond the elections of 2005. They include legislation to ensure the freedom of the press and to strengthen the media regulatory bodies, as well as measures against abuses such as calumny, hatred and xenophobia, and steps to ensure the impartiality of State-owned media.

12. With regard to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, a team of experts from the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been assisting the Government of National Reconciliation to design an effective programme. On 9 July, the Government announced a timetable for that programme, which foresaw the cantonment of forces commencing on 31 July and being completed by 15 August 2003. Disarmament would be conducted from 20 August to early September 2003, while demobilization would be completed by the end of September and reintegration by 20 October 2003. A programme for the voluntary disarmament of the civilian population would be implemented following the completion of the disarmament and demobilization of former combatants. Details of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

programme were presented to the Security Council when Prime Minister Seydou Diarra addressed the Council on 25 July. An office for the coordination of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in the northern part of the country was opened in the MPCI stronghold of Bouaké on 11 July. The Licorne and ECOWAS forces, as well as the United Nations military liaison officers, FANCI and the Forces nouvelles, will jointly run the office. The commencement of the disarmament was delayed, however, because the Forces nouvelles linked it to the adoption of an amnesty law and the appointment of the Defence and Interior Ministers.

13. The amnesty law was eventually adopted by the National Assembly on 6 August. The law grants amnesty to persons who committed political acts against the security of the State from September 2000 to September 2002, and allows exiles to return. It does not however grant immunity for crimes against humanity and serious economic offences. The amnesty bill had generated active debate both within and outside the National Assembly. Many Ivorians contended that the bill was premature and stressed the need to verify violations of human rights and identify perpetrators of human rights abuses before raising the question of amnesty. Supporters of the initiative argued that the adoption of the law was vital to the creation of an enabling environment that would facilitate the implementation of the Marcoussis Agreement, and further build the climate of confidence that is required for the pursuit of national reconciliation. The next critical stage in the development of the programme for the implementation of the Marcoussis Agreement will be the submission to the National Assembly of some 41 draft decrees and bills covering the issues referred to above.

14. Other significant steps taken by the Government of National Reconciliation towards implementing the Marcoussis Agreement include the ongoing efforts to extend State authority throughout the country and restore public services in the northern and western parts of the country. To that end, on 22 May, the Prime Minister convened a Cabinet session in the MPCI stronghold of Bouaké. The Government has also dispatched technical assessment missions, comprising officials from banking institutions and utility companies, to the north, with a view to facilitating the restoration of economic and social services. In the same vein, a train has provided a trial rail service to the north to pave the way for the reopening of the railway line to that area. Concurrent with the measures to reopen the rebel-controlled north, the Government has also initiated efforts to repair relations and restore trade links with the neighbouring countries Burkina Faso and Mali, which had been disrupted during the conflict.

15. Despite the progress described above, some key members of the ruling party, the Front populaire ivoirien (FPI), still generally view the Marcoussis Agreement as non-workable. They contend that the Agreement is in conflict with certain provisions of the Constitution of Côte d'Ivoire and that it therefore does not constitute the basis for long-term stability in the country. On this account, they have been actively attempting to undermine the implementation of the Agreement. In the National Assembly, FPI has severely criticized the Government's draft programme for the implementation of the Agreement, particularly those aspects relating to the sensitive issues relating to citizenship, national identity and the status of foreign nationals, which lie at the core of the political crisis in the country.

16. In addition, some key political figures opposed to the Marcoussis Agreement have been working with the so-called "young patriots" loyal to FPI to foment hostile acts against Cabinet Ministers affiliated with the Forces nouvelles. In this connection, the calls by the Speaker of the National Assembly for a civil disobedience campaign against the ministers from the Forces nouvelles have resulted in serious incidents that have given rise to concerns about the security of those ministers. The most serious incident occurred on 27 June when a mob of youths attacked the Minister for Communications and the Secretary-General of MPCI, Guillaume Soro, at the premises of the national broadcasting services, Radio Télévision ivoirienne (RTI). The Forces nouvelles viewed the incident as an assassination attempt and decided to delay the commencement of the disarmament process. The military commanders of the Forces nouvelles also issued a declaration calling for the withdrawal of their ministers from the Government of National Reconciliation and imposing a state of emergency in the northern part of the country, which was later rescinded.

17. Following that incident, the Licorne forces, the ECOWAS forces and the Government jointly stepped up efforts to provide effective security for all Cabinet Ministers and political leaders. ECOWAS has deployed specialized security protection personnel as part of its peacekeeping force, while the Government has created a special protection unit within the national gendarmerie, with funding from the European Union and Canada.

18. Other disruptive activities by elements from both sides have aimed at undermining the efforts to reunify the country. These include the destruction of part of the railway line in Abidjan by the "young patriots", in order to prevent the restoration of railway services to the north, and the arrest by MPCI of officials dispatched to the north by the Government to assess the requirements for the restoration of public services in that area. The officials were later released.

19. Another important issue that continues to fuel political tensions and frustrations among the parties signatory to the Marcoussis Agreement is the stand-off over the appointments of the Ministers of Defence and the Interior. The two portfolios are currently held by acting Ministers. There is also still an impasse over the appointment of the Minister for Women's, Children's and Family Affairs. In all three cases, the President, Laurent Gbagbo, has rejected the candidates proposed by the political parties. In his address to the Security Council on 25 July, the Prime Minister indicated his intention to devote his efforts to resolving this matter as expeditiously as possible.

IV. Activities of the Monitoring Committee

20. The Monitoring Committee, which oversees the implementation of the Marcoussis Agreement under the leadership of my Special Representative, Albert Tevoedjre, has been engaged in efforts to assist the parties in addressing the challenges described above. The Committee has been meeting on a regular basis to address issues before and since the formation of the new Government. It also receives representations concerning grievances from all the political forces, and has offered explanations or mediated differences of views in the interpretation of the Marcoussis or Accra Agreements. These mediation efforts are intended to promote mutual trust among all political actors. The Committee has embarked on

encouraging civil society organizations such as non-governmental organizations, traditional rulers, women's groups, the press and parliamentary groups to make their views known on outstanding political issues, especially in the period leading to the elections scheduled for 2005. The Committee has decided to meet at least once a week to review the overall political and security situation.

V. Deployment of the Mission

21. On 27 May, Brigadier General Abdul Hafiz (Bangladesh) was appointed Chief Military Liaison Officer of MINUCI. He visited United Nations Headquarters for pre-deployment briefings from 4 to 7 June, after which he and a small group of military liaison officers were deployed in Abidjan to begin setting up the Mission's military headquarters. The group of 26 military liaison officers authorized for the initial deployment under Security Council resolution 1479 (2003) underwent pre-deployment training at the headquarters of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone in Freetown, from 16 to 22 June, after which they were deployed to MINUCI on 23 June.

22. On 4 July, the Mission deployed three teams of military liaison officers to key locations in Abidjan, including two officers at FANCI operational headquarters, one officer at the ECOWAS command headquarters, and two officers at the Licorne headquarters at Port-Bouët. Field deployments of military liaison officer teams, including two officers at the FANCI theatre command headquarters at Yamoussoukro and four officers at the Forces nouvelles headquarters at Bouaké, were completed on 9 July. In addition, two officers were deployed to Duékoué in western Côte d'Ivoire on 24 July. Those field teams are currently focusing on monitoring the security situation on a 24-hour basis and establishing liaison with all the parties, and with the ECOWAS and Licorne forces. To date, the military liaison officer teams have received a reasonable degree of cooperation from their interlocutors. A total of 13 military liaison officers are assigned to the MINUCI headquarters in Abidjan.

23. In view of the improvement in the security situation in western Côte d'Ivoire following those quadripartite deployments there, and given the monitoring and support role that MINUCI is expected to play with respect to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, the Mission has requested approval for the immediate deployment of a second group of six military liaison officers, to be followed by a third group of 10 officers, out of the remaining 50. The deployment of the requested officers has been authorized and the mobilization of the necessary personnel is under way. Pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 1479 (2003), the remaining military liaison officers will be deployed progressively as needed and when security conditions permit. It is envisaged that the pace of their deployment will be determined mainly by the volume of activities related to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, as well as monitoring and liaison requirements in western and northern Côte d'Ivoire.

24. MINUCI has developed a plan under which military liaison officers will be deployed to nine team sites as follows: one team at Bouaké with 10 officers; one team at Korhogo with 6 officers, with oversight responsibility for Ouangolo and Ferké; one team at Yamoussoukro with 6 officers, with oversight responsibility for Daoukro, Bouaflé and Mbahiakro; one team at Bondoukou with 4 officers, with

oversight responsibility for Bouna; one team at Man with 6 officers, with oversight responsibility for Odienne; one team at Duékoué with 6 officers, with oversight responsibility for Guiglo and Toulépleu; one team at Daloa with 4 officers, with oversight responsibility for Vavoua and Séguéla; one team at San-Pédro with 4 officers; and one team at Abidjan with 8 officers. As the total number of military liaison officers deployed in the field increases, the military staff at MINUCI headquarters will be reinforced with an additional nine officers, bringing the total number of military liaison officers assigned to headquarters to 22 officers. This plan will be reviewed regularly with a view to adapting it to the evolving situation on the ground and activities in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

VI. Human rights

25. Protection of the civilian population, especially vulnerable groups, remains a major challenge in Côte d'Ivoire. Persistent violence and lack of security continue to undermine the protection of human rights throughout the country. Although the destruction of shanty towns in Abidjan has been somewhat curbed at the initiative of mayors and as a result of court orders, several incidents have been reported recently. According to information received, some human rights defenders and civil society activists continue to receive death threats. Others have gone into exile or have been forced to hide and regularly change their location. On 5 April 2003, the office of the Mouvement ivoirien des droits de l'homme in Abidjan was looted. In the west of the country, incidents of looting in towns and villages and extorting money from civilians continue to be reported, but on a lesser scale since the creation of the zone of confidence.

26. In March 2003, an independent Ministry of Human Rights was established, replacing the human rights portfolio which until then had been under the authority of the Minister of Justice. Another positive development is the Government's agreement in principle to visits by the special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, as well as by my Special Representative on internally displaced persons.

27. In response to a request by President Gbagbo in a letter dated 21 February 2003, I dispatched an advance team to Côte d'Ivoire to conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of an international commission of inquiry into human rights violations committed during the conflict. The team, which was led by the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), visited Abidjan, Bouaké, Korhogo, Man, Bangolo, Duékoué and Yamoussoukro from 27 February to 22 March. It also met with the Chief of Staff of FANCI, General Dary and General Beth of the French Licorne forces, representatives of the diplomatic community, a cross-section of civil society, and my Special Representative and the United Nations country team.

28. The team concluded that the establishment of an international commission of inquiry was widely supported by most interlocutors, including the Government of National Reconciliation and United Nations bodies, such as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. My Special Representative, in consultation

with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, will advise on the next steps when conditions on the ground permit the launching of the commission.

29. A senior human rights adviser and a small team of human rights officers, including a gender specialist and child protection officers, have been assigned to MINUCI. The Mission's activities relating to human rights will be primarily to facilitate and provide assistance in the implementation of the human rights-related provisions of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, as well as to monitor and report on the situation of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire, with specific attention to the rights of women and children, including child combatants.

30. Earlier in February 2003, OHCHR fielded a senior human rights officer to assist the United Nations country team. OHCHR, UNDP and the MINUCI human rights officers will continue to assist the Government in the establishment of an independent National Human Rights Commission and in the development of a National Human Rights Action Plan.

31. UNDP has commenced implementation of the ABRIS programme which is intended to provide targeted humanitarian assistance to affected communities in order to create conditions for post-conflict economic recovery. The programme applies a human rights framework that ensures that special conditions are created to protect vulnerable groups, guarantee transparency and promote respect for all stakeholders in a discrimination-free context. These concepts were operationalized in a training package aimed at three test groups. Training was conducted in Yamoussoukro and Bouaflé in June 2003, and included local government authorities, development support agencies and territorial administrative authorities. Late in June, 10 young human rights activists were trained and a session was organized for some 40 journalists and other media personnel from 23 to 25 July. Another training package will be provided to 40 human rights defenders and members of non-governmental and civil service organizations in August in Bouaké.

32. The United Nations country team has also established a sectoral group on protection, open to participation by all United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations. With a view to ensuring better protection for victims of human rights violations, the group has focused on issues of access, the illegal destruction of shanty towns, the elimination of discriminatory violence, hate media, and emphasizing the civilian status of camps for refugees and the internally displaced. Under the leadership of the country team's senior human rights adviser, the group developed a strategy document on protection, and contributed to the formulation of a code of conduct for humanitarian action.

VII. Public information and media issues

33. Since the formation of the Government of National Reconciliation in March 2003, the press has closely examined its role and acknowledged its responsibility in aggravating tensions as "partisan, petty and subservient to political parties which are at the same time their sponsors and their partners".

34. Several significant facts and initiatives have shown that the press as a whole and the State media, in particular, have fallen, willingly or reluctantly, into line with the reconciliation and peace process. Measures taken by the press include the creation of an Association of Journalists for Peace and Reconciliation following a

seminar organized by the International Media Action, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UNDP. The seminar was attended by all journalists from the south and the north of the country.

35. Following the incident at the premises of Radio Télévision ivoirienne, where there was an attempt on the life of the Minister for Communications, the new Interim Director-General and Interim Secretary-General pledged, during the hand-over ceremony, to guarantee the impartiality and objectivity of the press and to turn RTI into an active instrument that would broadcast messages of peace and reconciliation. The Government has also decided to strengthen the powers of the Observatoire de la liberté de la presse, de l'éthique et de la déontologie (OLPED), as the watchdog of the media, by authorizing it to sanction all articles that tend to provoke hatred or division and aggravate tensions.

36. Despite resistance, the Government should be able to adopt a press law, which would make it possible to set up a new legal framework to make the press move away from its financial dependence on political parties. This process will take time, since the forthcoming election period will certainly revive opposition and political wrangling.

VIII. Humanitarian aspects

37. The humanitarian situation in Côte d'Ivoire remains worrisome. Half a million people, mainly Burkinabè, Malians and Guinean migrant workers, have fled Côte d'Ivoire, either by their own means or with the support of their embassies, as a result of xenophobia and ethnic tensions. In addition, an estimated 800,000 people are internally displaced. Many children have been separated from their families and several hundreds recruited by all sides of the conflict. The breakdown of basic social services in areas outside government control has led to a desperate situation in the north and the west.

38. The situation of Liberian refugees in the western part of the country remains precarious. Of the 87,000 Liberian refugees who stayed in western Côte d'Ivoire in the *zone d'accueil des réfugiés* in 2002, only 36,800 have remained in the country. The only refugee camp in Côte d'Ivoire, Nicla Camp, currently hosts about 4,000 Liberian refugees. Many refugees had returned to Liberia despite the deteriorating situation there. Meanwhile, the recent escalation of the conflict in Liberia has led to a new exodus of more than 33,000 Liberians across the border into south-western Côte d'Ivoire. Hostility towards those who have remained or those who have recently arrived continues, because of the perceived involvement of armed Liberian elements in the Côte d'Ivoire conflict.

39. The International Organization for Migration has assisted the voluntary repatriation of over 1,000 foreign nationals from south-western Côte d'Ivoire since mid-July, and almost half of the 8,500 mostly Burkinabè migrant workers, who are accommodated in four transit centres in the western town of Guiglo, have registered for voluntary repatriation. Furthermore, UNICEF and some non-governmental organizations have been advocating with military entities against the use of child soldiers. Save the Children, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and others are actively identifying children separated from their families or unaccompanied, including ex-combatants, throughout the country.

40. Food security has become noticeably precarious in the north and the west. In the north, the de facto partitioning of the country has seriously affected the economic situation and, thus, the nutritional status of the population. Owing to the violence, displacement and lack of access to land over the past months, households have been forced to consume their seed stocks, thus jeopardizing production in the next planting season. As 68 per cent of women work in the area of agriculture, they and their households are particularly affected. Moreover, the large number of internally displaced persons is negatively affecting the food security of host communities, as some 80 per cent of the internally displaced are currently living with host families. Over 3,000 malnourished children have been identified and treated to date by Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) and Merlin in the west. The World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations urgently require funding to provide seeds and tools to some 10,000 small farmers in the west. WFP, in close collaboration with all partners involved, will establish a food security monitoring system to better target, track and plan interventions.

41. The governmental and administrative structures that supported the health-care system have completely receded in the north and west by virtue of the country's partition. Over 80 per cent of health personnel in that part of the country have abandoned their posts and 70 per cent of health infrastructures are closed. An array of non-governmental organizations, including Médecins du Monde, MSF, Merlin, ICRC and the Ivorian Red Cross, have been providing health care and support to medical facilities in the west and north. While the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations and ICRC partners currently attempt to fill the vacuum of the collapsed system through limited primary and secondary interventions, essential programmes such as reproductive health, family planning and vaccination programmes are unavailable to the population. Fortunately, immunization and vaccination programmes, particularly for measles, formerly run by the international non-governmental organizations, will now be reactivated by the authorities in charge, with the support of UNICEF and the World Health Organization.

42. More than 1 million primary school children have had their school year disrupted by the conflict. In Government-controlled areas, schools continue to function, and over 60,000 internally displaced children are attending supplementary schools established to receive the overflow. In northern zones, schools have been officially closed because of insecurity, although unofficial education activities have continued in many areas, including activities supported by religious organizations and civic groups, as well as UNICEF through the School for All programme and WFP through school canteen programmes. The Ministry of Education has recently annulled its decision to declare the school year null and void for zones formerly under rebel control. An evaluation system is being elaborated to determine which students will have their school year validated, and make-up courses are envisioned for the summer.

43. Overall coordination of international humanitarian activities is carried out through the Secretary-General's Humanitarian Envoy for the Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, Carolyn McAskie. An Inter-Agency Humanitarian Coordination Committee was established in February 2003, pending the appointment of a Humanitarian Coordinator for Côte d'Ivoire, so as to ensure complementarity of humanitarian operations. The Inter-Agency Committee has drafted a strategy for assistance to

internally displaced persons, which will be submitted for consideration to the newly established Inter-Ministry Humanitarian Coordination Committee. The Inter-Agency Committee will work closely with this new committee to improve cooperation and coordination between the humanitarian community and government ministries. The humanitarian community is battling a lack of resources in its attempt to address the overwhelming needs of returning displaced populations and the rehabilitation of communities. The Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal for Côte d'Ivoire and the five most affected neighbours, which was launched on 29 April 2003, has received only 20 per cent of the total requirements of $91 million.

IX. Economic and social recovery

44. Côte d'Ivoire continues to face a severe economic and social crisis, which has had adverse repercussions on the entire West African subregion. The neighbouring countries Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and the Niger, which are heavily dependent on Côte d'Ivoire's transport facilities for imports and exports, and on remittances from their migrant nationals, have been the worst affected by the Ivorian crisis.

45. The optimistic projections of 3 per cent growth in 2002 for Côte d'Ivoire's economy have been revised downwards, to –1.2 per cent. The primary sector has witnessed the smallest contraction (0.9 per cent), while the secondary and tertiary sectors have been the most affected, with contractions of 3.8 and 5.3 per cent, respectively. In the agricultural sector, the production and marketing of cotton, sugar cane, tobacco and cashew nuts have been seriously eroded. Private sector activity is in a deep depression, and the country's business risk rating has deteriorated drastically. The hotel industry continues to experience operational losses and, according to the National Federation of Industries and Services, activities have dropped by 25 to 100 per cent since September 2002.

46. For the year 2002, Government revenues reached 1,517.8 billion CFA francs against projections of 1,473 billion CFA francs and reflected an improvement in fiscal and non-fiscal revenues. However, increases in public expenditures, in particular military expenditures to support the war effort, resulted in an overall treasury deficit of 91.8 billion CFA francs.

47. Trade with the rest of the world has been negatively affected by the freezing of credit lines and by the disruption and interruption of port facilities. Despite the unfavourable economic trends reported above, however, the country has witnessed an improvement in the external trade balance, essentially owing to substantial increases in prices of export products combined with a reduction in the value of imports. Overall, in spite of a negative balance of the services account, the current account stood at a positive balance of 532.7 billion CFA francs.

48. At the monetary level, the crisis in the country has provoked a tightening and curtailment of public bank lending. Bank branches in the interior and in the war zones have closed and lending operations are being directed towards other countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union. Prices of basic commodities have risen, and there is a shortage of products originating from the war zones.

49. Meanwhile, there has been a sharp decline in the flow of external resources to Côte d'Ivoire since the outbreak of the fighting. Support from the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative stood at 225 billion CFA francs by the end of

2002. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have put on hold disbursements of the second tranche of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility and the second tranche of the economic recovery credit. Côte d'Ivoire, however, has continued to respect its debt obligations towards IMF and the World Bank.

50. At the end of June 2003, the World Bank and IMF dispatched an evaluation mission to Côte d'Ivoire to review the country's macroeconomic performance over the past year, the perspectives in terms of the socio-economic recovery and the resumption of their respective cooperation programmes. While the findings of the mission have not yet been released, it constitutes the first step towards a multi-donor assessment and programming mission planned later in the year.

51. The recent visit of the Prime Minister to Europe and North America is part of the Government's strategy to mobilize the partnerships and resources needed to support the implementation of the national reconstruction programme that it intends to finalize in the coming months. The European Commission has already adopted an immediate post-crisis rehabilitation programme of €30 million (national reconciliation, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, economic and social rehabilitation for internally displaced persons) for Côte d'Ivoire.

52. The Government is also considering additional fiscal and non-fiscal measures intended to boost private sector performance and put the country on the road to social and economic recovery.

X. Financial aspects

53. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1479 (2003), I have obtained from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions commitment authority in the amount of $14 million to meet the cost of the most essential and immediate start-up requirements of MINUCI for the period from 13 May to 31 December 2003. The proposed budget for MINUCI is under preparation and will take full account of the Mission's resource requirements for the period from 13 May 2003 to 30 June 2004. I shall request the General Assembly to take action on the budget during the main part of its fifty-eighth session. As at 30 June 2003, the total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations amounted to $1,108.6 million.

XI. Observations

54. The Ivorian peace process has made encouraging progress in the six months that have passed since the signing of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. In particular, the installation of the Government of National Reconciliation, the preparation of the Government's work programme, the confidence-building steps that have been taken by FANCI and the Forces nouvelles, the adoption of an amnesty law, the development of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, and the extension of the ceasefire line to the hitherto inaccessible western part of the country have laid a good basis for further progress towards the full implementation of the Marcoussis Agreement, which should lead to the final goal of holding free and fair elections in October 2005.

55. Considering the delicate issues that need to be addressed, as indicated in the Government's programme of work, the preparations for those elections must begin early. The United Nations stands ready to provide appropriate support in the organization and conduct of the elections, should the Government of National Reconciliation request such support. It will also be necessary for other international partners to extend assistance to Côte d'Ivoire in the preparations for the elections.

56. The road ahead is long, and the peace process is fraught with pitfalls and contradictions that have to be surmounted. The hostilities between FANCI and the Forces nouvelles have ended, but peace is not yet at hand. Although the Government of National Reconciliation is functioning, it remains incomplete and often works in disharmony. The Government has taken significant steps towards implementing the Marcoussis Agreement, but all parties have yet to demonstrate their full commitment to the Agreement.

57. These contradictions must be resolved, in order to create a climate conducive to a constructive discussion by the National Assembly of the crucial issues presented in the Government's work programme. In this regard, I appeal to the Ivorian parties to make the concessions necessary to end the impasse over the appointments to the still vacant portfolios of Defence, the Interior, and Women's, Children's and Family Affairs. I also urge the FPI party and the Ivorian law enforcement authorities to curb the activities of militias, thuggish groups and individuals who seek to undermine the peace process. FANCI should consider a moratorium on purchasing new weapons, while the National Assembly should pursue the efforts to adopt new legislation aimed at ensuring a more independent and responsible press.

58. For their part, the Forces nouvelles must end the de facto partitioning of the country and cooperate with the efforts of the Government of National Reconciliation to extend State authority throughout the territory of Côte d'Ivoire. The continuing control of the northern part of the country by commanders of the Forces nouvelles seriously constrains the Government's ability to extend its authority and hampers the process of national reconciliation, as well as the free movement of people, goods and services in the country. Now that they are part of the new Government, the Forces nouvelles cannot continue to run a parallel administration in the northern part of the country. I also urge the Forces nouvelles to adhere to the timetable for disarmament set out by the Government of National Reconciliation and to continue their confidence-building dialogue with FANCI.

59. The presence of the Licorne and ECOWAS forces remains indispensable if the prevailing, albeit fragile, stability is to be sustained. I commend those forces for their excellent work under difficult conditions and with limited resources. At the same time, I am deeply concerned about the financial difficulties that the ECOWAS forces continue to face. Particularly worrisome are the indications that, unless they receive the necessary funding, the ECOWAS forces may not be able to perform the functions assigned to them under the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. The lack of adequate funding may also jeopardize the operations to sustain stability in the sensitive border areas, for which the ECOWAS force requires additional troops. I therefore wish to appeal to Member States to provide the requisite financial assistance to these forces on an urgent basis.

60. The deployment of the military and civilian personnel of MINUCI continues to make satisfactory progress, and the Mission is engaged in important monitoring and liaison activities that complement the peacekeeping operations of the Licorne and

ECOWAS forces. The Mission is also coordinating the activities of the Monitoring Committee and performing monitoring activities with respect to the human rights situation and the media, and is preparing to assist in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

61. The critical humanitarian crisis created by the conflict and the dislocation of Côte d'Ivoire's economy continue to present serious challenges. While the international community is committed to assisting the country in addressing those challenges, the onus remains on the Government and on all Ivorian parties to take the necessary measures to create a security climate conducive to the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance, and to restore the confidence of its partners in its economic recovery and development programme.

62. I wish to commend the efforts of the Government of National Reconciliation to improve relations with its neighbours and to restore trade links with Burkina Faso and Mali. However, I remain concerned about the existence of armed Liberian elements that are reportedly still operating in some areas of western Côte d'Ivoire. These elements constitute an immediate and a long-term threat to the efforts to stabilize both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. I nevertheless feel greatly encouraged about the ongoing efforts of ECOWAS and the Security Council to resolve the conflict in Liberia, which has been the primary source of instability in the subregion. I believe that the ongoing efforts to launch a multinational force and, subsequently, a peacekeeping operation in Liberia will open up possibilities for addressing cross-cutting regional issues, such as the use of child soldiers and mercenaries, and the exploitation of national resources to fuel conflicts. Pursuant to the request of the Security Council in its presidential statement of 25 July (S/PRST/2003/11), I have asked my Special Representative for West Africa to conduct a comprehensive study on these issues in close consultation with my Special Representatives in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as other partners, which would enable me to submit recommendations to the Council on how they could be addressed through enhanced coordination among the United Nations operations in the subregion.

63. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the Security Council and to ECOWAS and donor countries for their continued support to MINUCI. I also commend my Special Representative, Albert Tevoedjre, all MINUCI civilian and military personnel and other United Nations agencies, as well as other humanitarian and development partners, for their efforts in supporting the peace process and in addressing the humanitarian crisis in Côte d'Ivoire during the reporting period.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire: contributions as at 13 August 2003

Authorized military strength: 76 military liaison officers

Country	*Military liaison officers*	*Total*
Austria	1	1
Bangladesh	2	2
Benin	2	2
Ghana	1	1
Jordan	2	2
India	1	1
Ireland	2	2
Kenya	1	1
Nepal	1	1
Niger	1	1
Nigeria	2	2
Pakistan	1	1
Paraguay	2	2
Poland	1	1
Republic of Moldova	1	1
Romania	1	1
Senegal	2	2
Tunisia	1	1
Uruguay	1	1
Total	**26**	**26**

Chief Military Liaison Officer: Bangladesh

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